AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

Claims 1-14 (Canceled.)

Claim 15 (Currently Amendd). A method for detecting and/or quantifying a nucleic acid coding for submandibular/submaxillary rat 1 protein (SMR1) comprising:

a) contacting a DNA or RNA molecule with a nucleotide probe having the nucleotide sequence of nucleotides 1 to 510 of SEQ ID NO: 7 in a hybridization solution containing

0.5 M sodium phosphate, pH 7.2,

7% sodium dodecylsulfate,

1 mM EDTA,

1% bovine serum albumin, and

sonicated salmon sperm DNA: 100 mg/ml,

at 65~~%~~ °C for 16 to 20 h so as to allow said probe to hybridize with the target DNA or RNA molecule, washing four times for 10 minutes at 65°C with a solution containing

40 mM sodium phosphate, pH 7.2

1% sodium dodecylsulfate

1 mM EOTA; and

b) detecting the hybrid formed between the DNA or RNA molecule and said nucleotide probe.

Claim 16 (Currently Amended). A method according to claim 15 for detecting and/or qualifying mRNA coding for SMR1 polypeptide consisting essentially of:

a) preparing mRNAs containing poly (A) sequence from the sub-maxillary gland of a rat;

b) subjecting said RNAs prepared in step a) to an electrophoresis in a gel;

c) transferring said RNAs to a nitrocellulose membrane;

d) contacting said membrane with a nucleotide probe having the nucleotide sequence of nucleotides 1 to 510 of SEQ ID NO: 7 ~~under stringent conditions allowing~~ said probe to hybridize to the target RNA, washing four times for 10 minutes at 65°C with a solution containing

40 mM sodium phosphate, pH 7.2

1% sodium dodecylsulfate

1 mM EOTA;

e) detecting the hybrid formed between the RNA and the nucleotide probe; and

f) optionally quantifying the number of hybrid molecules as formed.

Claim 17 (Canceled.)